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Modern Philology

Vol. VII

January, 1910

No. 3

PIERS PLOWMAN, THE WORK OF ONE OR OF FIVE

A REPLY

I ought perhaps to apologize for offering today a refutation of Professor Manly's refutation of my refutation of his refutation of the usually accepted ideas concerning *Piers Plowman*. In the new article published by him in *Modern Philology*, July, 1909, he announces further statements for the time when he shall have "found a method for presenting some of his results that satisfies him;" and he also complains that in my own article of January, 1909, the "arrangement of parts is skilfully devised to break such force as the arguments of the adversary may have when properly massed and valued."¹ To avoid censure, it would apparently be better to wait till he had himself massed all his arguments.

But, without forestalling what may pertain to the future, it is, I hope, not amiss to answer now what has been propounded up to now, and to state the reasons why, after having studied Professor Manly's new essay, I persist in my former belief. I shall content myself, for the time being, with making one general statement, and offering a series of remarks which I noted down as I read the attempted refutation.

I

My general statement is to the effect that, in the maze of all those denyings and contestings, and those recurring assertions that

¹ Pp. 41 and 2.

the disputant has not understood or not quite understood his opponent, that his "new 'connecting link' is too weak to sustain even its own weight," that he has missed the point, etc., the reader may well miss the point too and forget what question is at stake and what Professor Manly has undertaken to prove.

As I recalled at the beginning of my first article, from the fourteenth century to the twentieth, *Piers Plowman*—a very characteristic poem, none truly like it—has been considered the work of one man; such testimonies as we possess are unanimous; there is not one to the contrary. Professor Manly does his best to diminish their value: not improbably, however, he would be glad if he had a tenth of it on his side, but it is a fact that he has none.

Such being the case, he comes forth with a theory of his own, which he must make good, and according to which *Piers Plowman* is not the work of any Langland at all, but was written by four different men; he even says five, but I persist in not counting John But and his few lines. These four men, having the same interest in the same problems, the same modesty, the same taste for anonymity, being all of them "men of notable intellectual power, and of ideas and aims of the same general tendency (notwithstanding individual differences)," being all of them "sincere men, interested primarily in the influence of their satire and finding themselves in hearty sympathy, despite minor differences, with the poem as it reached them" (pp. 2, 17), took up, we are told, the work in turn, remodeled it, each according to his own will, spoiling, in spite of their "notable intellectual power," many passages, and failing to understand others—the spoiling and failures being moreover of such grievous nature that a difference of authorship is thereby evidenced. Hence, of course, the necessity of admitting the remarkable phenomenon that each of those sincere men, of notable intellectual power, with a fondness for political and religious allegory, was careful to die, mothlike, as I said, just as he had "laid" his poem. Else, how would the sincere and clever predecessor have allowed his work to go about the world garbled, as we hear, mangled, and tagged with continuations not his own?—especially when a continuation had been contemplated from the first, and had even, as I have shown¹ been

¹ P. 7 of my article in *Modern Philology*, January, 1909.

foreshadowed in the part allotted by Professor Manly to the earliest of his supposed four poets.

If the garblings and failures to understand are so deep, great, and grievous as to denote a difference of authors, the surviving authors, one or two of them at least, would have given his own continuation, but none did. Professor Manly cannot say both that those faults and differences are so great as to demonstrate a difference of authorship, and that they are not so great as to have tempted any of his authors 1, 2, and 3 to protest and to set right the misdeeds of his authors 2, 3, and 4.

When Jean de Meun wrote his conclusion for the *Roman de la Rose*, Guillaume de Lorris was dead; when Sir W. Alexander wrote his for Sidney's *Arcadia*, Sidney was dead, and there could not be any protests. When Marti, on the contrary, gave his continuation of *Guzman de Alfarache*, Mateo Aleman was not dead, and he hastened to write and publish his own continuation. When the so-called Avellaneda issued, nine years after the first part of *Don Quixote*, a second one of his own making, Cervantes dropped the trifling works with which he had been busy, wrote with all speed his own continuation, expressed the bitterest indignation at the audacity of the intruder, and took care to kill *Don Quixote* outright in that second part, so as to be safe in the future.

All the chances are that, in order to have existed at all, Professor Manly's modest, sincere, and clever men must have died, with due punctuality, each after he had written, so as to make room for a successor and garbler: no small wonder.¹

Given this self-assumed task, and the fact that there is not a trace of external evidence to support the theory of a quadruple authorship, the only sort of proof Mr. Manly can adduce is that resulting precisely from those mistakes, failures to notice or understand, spoilings of passages, differences in thoughts, meter, language and literary value. And he must, first, carefully separate what may be due to scribes and what to his several authors. I have pointed out how much, in the matter of dialect for example, may be due to scribes; the important article of Mr. R. W. Chambers and Mr. J. H. G.

¹ I again say nothing of John But about whom Professor Manly writes, "We hear of no protest" (p. 18). No one protested against him because no one heard of him. He could well in any case be let alone.

Grattan in the *Modern Language Review* of April, 1909, much better shows, not only that version B approximates more closely than was usually believed version A, but that, on the other hand, we are much further removed from the author's original text than was commonly supposed, several *layers* of MSS intervening between that text and those we possess: so that it is no easy matter to guess, in difficult passages, in questions of meter, dialect, etc., what is his and what may be due to what they rightly call an "editing scribe."

Professor Manly has to show, besides, that whenever, in the history of literature, such differences and mistakes as he thinks he detects, such spoilings or discardings of fine passages, have been found in the various versions or editions of a work, then, surely and invariably, a difference of author is the cause. If it can be pointed out that discrepancies as great exist between revisions or continuations of poems certainly due to the same author, his system falls through, for the discrepancies pointed out by him will be then no proof at all, and he has not two orders of proofs, he has only that one. This I consider the main point at stake, the keystone of the whole discussion.

It is not a little strange that, in his essays on the authorship of *Piers Plowman*, Mr. Manly entirely neglected this side of the question. He collected in the various versions of the poem as many mistakes and differences as he could, and without comparing them with any similar cases, drew outright from them his own conclusions, which are, as we know, of a very large order. I called attention, in my sections III and VIII, to some such parallel cases, showing how considerable differences in style, ideas, ways of thinking, meter, merit, etc., how grievous mistakes and lapsuses may be discovered in revisions or continuations certainly not due to a second, third, or fourth author, but to the original one.

I cannot help thinking that it is an inadequate answer for Professor Manly to say that, as for Ronsard, "he has not examined the revisions he made in his text" (p. 50), and that, as for *Robinson Crusoe*, he can speak only from a somewhat distant recollection, not having read it "since about 1891."

I had, to the same effect, quoted Tasso's two *Gerusalemme*, and these Mr. Manly has "examined with some care," but he has found

that, except for "the exclusion of many episodes and the systematic assimilation of the heroes to antique models," the second *Gerusalemme* is, if anything, better than the first, "usually richer and more powerful in style, more concise and more packed with meaning" (p. 52).

I shall not express any opinion of my own on the question of literary merit; my ways of thinking might differ somewhat widely from those of Professor Manly, for I see that the line added in version C of *Piers Plowman* and praised by me, in which Langland pictures himself as beholding, at the opening of his poem,

Al the welthe of this worlde and the woo bothe,

must have been, according to Mr. Manly, the work "fundamentally," not of a poet but of a "topographer" (p. 49). I certainly fail to detect the topographer. In the Tasso question, the best is, maybe, to abide by the judgment of critics who had no chance of being biased and auto-suggested by the present discussion, as they wrote before it: their verdict is not doubtful. Perhaps, however, it might be enough to recall that Mr. Manly himself recognizes, at least, that remarkable differences exist between the two *Gerusalemme*, and that there is in the second "a systematic assimilation of the heroes to antique models." When we remember the importance he attaches to a (quite imaginary, as I think) difference of merit in B's description of Wrath as compared to the other sins in A, there is nothing rash in surmising that he would have drawn a not insignificant argument in favor of a multiple authorship had he been so lucky as to find that the portraits of "Pernel proud herte" and Glotoun in version A, had been replaced by portraits of Juno and Bacchus in version B.

I may also add that, in this all-important question of comparisons,¹ I quoted just a few examples, but it would be easy to quote more: this is a ground which has as much to be cleared before we arrive at a conclusion, as the question of the "tabular presentation of statistics" which we are promised (p. 41), concerning sentence structure, versification, etc.—which presentation will have to be accompanied by a careful discrimination between what may be due to an "editing scribe" and to the author; and also and necessarily by a minute comparison with the remodelings by other writers of their own

¹ Cf. below, remark 16.

works, or by their publishing various works of their own at various periods and under different circumstances.

Such men as Rabelais, for example, will have to be remembered. His first editions are full of local and dialectal peculiarities of which no trace remains in his later revisions: "Rabelais," writes Mr. Baur, "issues in 1535 his *Gargantua*, the first edition of which seems to appeal to a public especially Lyonnese, being full of Lyonnese words and local allusions that he erased when his books reached universal fame."¹

From the point of view of changes in political or philosophical ideals, such men will have to be discussed, too, as the one concerning whose *Odes* Sainte Beuve wrote: "At each page, a violent hatred against the Revolution, a frantic adoration of monarchical souvenirs, a frenzied faith more anxious for the martyr's palm than the poet's laurel." Victor Hugo must surely have been several men, since it is that staunch supporter of democracy whom Sainte Beuve could thus describe once in an article in the *Globe*.

Concerning the more or less suitable changes a poet may introduce in his work—plot, style, aim, etc.—when he writes three versions of it, account will have to be taken of authors whom we can speak of with certainty, because they are modern, and that we know exactly what occurred in their case, and whether they were one each or several.

A conspicuous example of a treble version has been recently studied by Mr. Christian Maréchal, who certainly never heard of the present controversy, and who writes of those three versions in words strangely similar to those used by Professor Manly with regard to *Piers Plowman*, except that he notices greater and more striking differences in the case of Lamartine and the various texts of his *Jocelyn*.

Three versions of this poem,² the two first left unfinished, have come down to us in manuscript. As first conceived, and as appears from the text of version I, the poem was to be short, with well-defined aims, no wanderings, imagination being held in check, a sense of measure governing the whole. Lamartine calls it at that time

¹ A. Baur, *Maurice Scève*, 1906, p. 60.

² *Jocelyn inédit de Lamartine, d'après les manuscrits originaux* (the name of the hero is written thus in all the MSS), Paris, 1909, Introd. chap. II, "Les trois Poèmes."

a *poemetto*, and says: "cela aura quatre chants," of which we have two, but we possess the plan of the two others. His firm intention to continue it in the same style, and the pleasure he took in that style, are shown by a letter to his best friend, Count de Virieu, in which he writes: "This is my masterpiece; nothing of this sort will have been read before."¹ A strong argument this, in favour of a multiple authorship in case changes were to occur; and they did.

In version II, grave alterations are noticeable; the poet, writes Mr. Maréchal, "is carried away by an inspiration, generous no doubt, but perhaps too rich, and of which, in any case, he is no longer the master." The third canto now contains what was to be the conclusion of the second. He adds "fine episodic digressions for which there was no room in the first plan." In this state, "the poem differs as much from the first version as from the last. It differs from the first by the abundance of descriptions . . . by the lack of equilibrium," etc. It differs even more from the third, where the very groundwork of the poem, its religious and philosophical aim, are deeply altered. While the hero of the second version "reached religious resignation through his trials," in the third he becomes "the man of nature . . . indomitably standing against religious and social order, to which he opposes his rights and whose victim he thinks he is." The goal we thus reach is the antipodes of that for which we had started: the poet had begun with the intention of offering us a kind of soul's tonic, and he leaves us "languid and weakened."

Literary differences are no less glaring between the three versions. In the first text, the "sense of measure and proportion" is remarkable; indeed, far more so than in Langland's version A. "The action," says Mr. Maréchal, "proceeds and develops with a regularity which is reassuring and shows the poet ever the master of his inspiration. On the contrary, after the first part of the second epoch," a word Lamartine chose, on second thoughts, instead of canto, as Langland chose *passus*, "description assumes disquieting proportions, and, from the fourth epoch especially, one feels that facility takes command and that discipline is silenced." Far from checking himself, the author's way of writing and composing becomes, as he

¹ Dec. 11, 1831, *ibid.*, p. xxviii.

proceeds, more and more loose. "This defect is especially perceptible in the truly extraordinary manner in which the ninth epoch is formed around a fragment originally written for the sixth, and under conditions such that Lamartine, while he wrote the several parts thereof, not only ignored the places those fragments would occupy with regard to each other, but even, as evidenced by the state of the manuscript, did not know whether they would end by forming a ninth epoch at all when put together." Version III is, to sum up, remarkable for "*le relâchement de la forme*."

I cannot but recommend a study of these newly published documents to anyone who may be tempted to find proofs of a multiple authorship in Langland's changes of mood, style, merit, or thoughts. He will find that the changes are greater in Lamartine; and, as they occurred in the space of four years,² while it took Langland nine times longer to change much less, he will reach the conclusion that, if one of the two was several men instead of only one, it must have been Lamartine, not Langland.

II

The remarks which I now beg to offer are the following ones:

1.—On the unique characteristics of Langland, I cannot but maintain word for word what I said, namely that "alone in Europe, and what is more remarkable, alone in his country, he gives us a true impression of the grandeur of the internal reform that had been going on in England during the century: the establishment on a firm basis of that institution unique then . . . the Westminster Parliament." I pointed out, in a previous work, that most of the aspirations of Langland can be paralleled by petitions of the Commons, and that no other poem offers anything of the kind, Chaucer having not even an allusion to the phenomenon, though having been himself a member of Parliament, and describing his Knight as having been one too.

This fact remains a fact. It will change nothing to show, as Mr. Manly says he will another day, that Alain Chartier gave (in the following century) "reasons for not admitting political discussion to his poetry but reserving it for prose" (p. 3). The example of

¹Pp. xxviii, xxxiii, xliv, xlv.

²First version begun, November, 1831, third version finished, November, 1835.

Langland, and especially of Gower, who did admit political discussion in their poetry, was surely the one to have influenced Chaucer if he was to be influenced at all, but he was not. No "discussion," moreover, would have been needed for Chaucer to show that he had been impressed in some way by the colossal change that had occurred in his country, and in his country alone, in his days, before his very eyes: a word would have been enough, such a word as we find in Froissart, but he has it not. I stated this because it is so, and because it shows, with the rest, how Langland stands apart. The "implied criticism" of Chaucer which Mr. Manly thinks he detects in my words is quite out of the question.

2.—I persist in thinking that Langland was, as nearly as can be, uninfluenced and unbiased by foreign ideas, principles, and sentiments. By which I do not mean that no reminiscences of "French and Latin literature" (p. 3) can be found in his work: I pointed out myself a number of such reminiscences in my *Piers Plowman*, 1894.

3.—To ask (p. 3) whether I require the reader to "believe that Parliament had some esoteric doctrine, some high ideals of government kept secret from the people," is to lend me a hypothetical absurdity which I certainly never propounded. My plea has not only nothing to do with it but is the very reverse of it: the parliamentary changes were great and notorious; yet they found no echo in literature except in *Piers Plowman*, which by this stands alone.

How Marsiglio of Padua, the bold theoretician of the first part of the fourteenth century, can be quoted (p. 4) to gainsay my statement, I fail to see. The question reflected in *Piers Plowman* is not one of theory, but one of actual and real practice, not of the first half of the fourteenth century (when that practice had not yet fully developed) but of the second; not of nations in general, but of England in particular. I say: Langland alone gives us a true impression of that English internal reform and of its grandeur—I am answered: do not forget Marsiglio of Padua who had abroad noteworthy theories before any such reform had been realized anywhere.

An argument is drawn (p. 4) from the fact that the fine line "might of the communes" etc. is spoiled in C. So it is, at least in such texts as have come down to us, but what of it? Langland, while writing in his old age the last revision of his work, sometimes

improved and sometimes spoiled it, just as was the case with Ronsard, Tasso, and others.

Professor Manly is afraid that I read into the passage "might of the communes" "very modern ideas" (p. 5), which would certainly be a grievous fault. But, without pleading that I have made for many years some study of the period and might perhaps be entitled to venture an opinion, I beg to point out that what Langland describes in these words, and what I say that he describes, is what actually took place in his days; and we have Professor Manly's own assurance that the doctrines thus condensed "were commonly and widely held among the people of England" (p. 3). I did not read anything either modern or otherwise into those lines, and scarcely did more than quote them.

Wonder is expressed thereupon (p. 5) at Langland having said nothing of the Peasants' revolt "in the poems" attributed to him: by which poems must doubtless be understood his last revision, written, as I think I showed, about 1398, that is seventeen years after the revolt, while the two other versions were written years before it. Professor Manly considers somehow that such a neglect points to a multiple authorship; this omission would be extraordinary if the three versions are by one author and quite natural if by four or five. It seems difficult to agree, especially when we remember that, according to the same critic, those four men had "ideas and aims of the same general tendency." If yet the question were maintained and we were asked to say why Langland did not mention the revolt, the answer would be: for the same cause that Shakespeare neglected to speak of "Magna Charta" in his account of a reign of which it was the most important event. Professor Manly merrily asks if Langland was "alone in England ignorant of [these things];" let him put the same question to Shakespeare.

4.—I had spoken of Langland as having his work "for his life's companion and confidant." Professor Manly answers (p. 6) that then his "carelessness and indifference concerning the condition in which his poem was published . . . is, to say the least, remarkable."—But it has nothing out of the common. Care for the work and care for the copies (and in our days for the proofs) of the work do not necessarily go together. Examples are not hard to find of people

who put their soul in their writings and who neglected to see that the copies going about were correct; the names of Shakespeare and Sidney will, I suppose, occur to everybody. Mr. Manly insists on the fact that I spoke of the Visions as being Langland's "continuous occupation," the subject of his "constant occupation," he being "constantly occupied with his text" (pp. 5, 7, 19). I never said that he was constantly occupied with the copies of his text—and besides I did not use at all, to any such intent, the words "constant," "constantly," "continuous."¹

5.—Concerning scribes and what I had said of their possible mistakes, Professor Manly has recourse throughout his article to much irony and banter in order to persuade his readers that I attributed more than their due to "those careless professional scribes" to the "persistent carelessness of the scribes . . . [which] must have sorely irritated the professional soul of W. Langland" to that scribe who "is surely a most troublesome person."² This sort of *leit-motiv* recurs from place to place.

I have only to point out that, in their independent work, and after the most minute inspection of the *Piers Plowman* MSS that was ever made, Messrs. Chambers and Grattan lay to the door of "the careless scribe," much more than I ever did. "What Dr. Moore has," they say, "remarked of the early MSS of the *Divine Comedy*, is equally true of the MSS of *Piers Plowman*: their writers are not exact copyists, but editors, although working without an editor's sense of responsibility."³ They show, moreover, that the best texts we possess have sometimes undergone twice in succession the revision of an editing scribe, so that we are necessarily, at times, rather far from the original composition. The two best MSS of A are the Vernon and the Harleian ones, of which our authors say that, not only they were edited by their scribes, but that "their common ancestor was also an edited MS." The same critics detect "sophistication" in certain texts of the Visions, and they do not refer it to the author or to several authors with a mangling disposition, but only to scribes.⁴

¹ The only place where I find, in my article, the word "constantly" used with reference to this is at p. 17, where it comes in only to be qualified in the remark that Langland had "more or less constantly" beside him a text of his poem.

² Pp. 7, 18, 35.

³ *Modern Language Review*, April, 1909, p. 368.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

Professor Manly finds it "somewhat difficult to understand the relations [of these careless professional scribes] to Langland" (p. 7). He is very lucky if he finds it only somewhat difficult. Such relations, about which he has many jokes, are one of the hardest problems of mediaeval literature. The best authority in such matters pronounces it "insoluble." We can only make suppositions, but we can make more probable ones than those Professor Manly playfully recommends to our acceptance; either that in which he gives to the author's wife and daughter a part to play, or that according to which "the admiration and interest of [amateur copyists] would have led them to ask the author where these loose slips and fly-leaves belonged" (p. 7).—They would in fact never have asked, because they would never have noticed. In such an irregular work, discrepancies are not very striking: and they struck no one, in fact, neither scribe, printer, nor literary critic, for five centuries, until Professor Manly himself pointed out two or three (and I one more).

Some of the reasoning in the same paragraph is difficult to follow, more difficult to accept. "Were the scribes," Professor Manly asks, p. 7, "paid by other men who had read or heard of the poem and wished copies for themselves? If [this] be assumed, what becomes of the mystery in which the author enveloped his identity?"—As if it were an extraordinary phenomenon, an unheard-of thing, that an anonymous poem, or one whose author is but doubtfully known, may have become famous and the copies sought for.

In the same paragraph again we are referred to C, XIV, 117 ff., with the intent of showing that Langland evinces there his aversion for the scribe who copies carelessly, and that he would therefore have keenly resented the misdeeds of any such when his own work was at stake—just as if he had been another Chaucer. But in that passage, Langland simply enumerates what defects make a "chartre chalangible" before the courts;¹ it is a very special case, as far removed as can be from the copying of poetical MSS, and it is very bold to deduce from it conclusions as to the poet's personal views about

¹A charter is chalangible · by-fore a chief Justice,
Yf fals Latyn be in that lettere · the lawe hit enpugneth,
Other peynted par-entrelaignarie · parcels over-skipped;
The gome that so gloseth chartres · a goky is yholden.
So is he a goky by god · that in the godspel failleth.

scribes in general, and about the trouble he must have taken to personally correct the copies made of his own work.

Such an attitude as Langland's has nothing wonderful. Cervantes knew of the criticisms made as to the strange way in which the stealing of Sancho's ass is narrated in the first part of *Don Quixote*; he wrote a kind of defense nine years later, but does not seem to have troubled himself in the interval to verify how the text stood that had been so criticised, and it is very difficult to make his reply fit (as shown below, remark 16) either those criticisms, or the passages doubtfully his, or even those certainly written by himself. Yet he was not indifferent to his work; far from it, as his indignation against the author of a sham continuation sufficiently shows.

Referring, p. 8, to MSS Univ. Coll. Oxford, and Rawlinson Poet. 137 which contain a "jumble of incoherent facts" (read patches; Mr. Manly's own scribe must have betrayed him), Professor Manly objects, that "the confusion was not in the author's MS, but in a later copy." I quite agree and ever did, and do not see how my words can be taken to mean that I believed the scribes to have had, in this case, Langland's autograph in their hands. My words were to the effect that the two MSS in question were copied "from the same original which offered a good text," though the leaves had been disarranged, and this certainly does not point to the author's autograph. I had quoted this example in a note,¹ simply to recall to what extent scribes *could* carry carelessness and indifference to sense: there were, as the event shows, scribes negligent enough to issue such copies without noticing their absurdity; any text given men of their stamp with leaves or slips in a wrong order would be copied by them unflinchingly wrong. Such accidental misplacings as might happen in Langland's own MS (and it so turns out that, judging by the result, they were neither numerous nor glaring and easy to detect) would pass unnoticed by scribes like these, and by many of their betters.

6.—There is, in Professor Manly's article, a good deal of discussion (pp. 9 ff.) concerning what I said of Langland's allowing copyists to transcribe his work at various moments when it was in the making. I am quite willing to wait till Messrs. Chambers and Grattan have finished their inspection of the MSS. But whatever may be thought

¹ Note 3, p. 4 of my article. Cf. Chambers and Grattan, *ut supra*, p. 376.

or discovered with respect to each of the separate examples I quoted, the author did, at all events, to a notable extent, what I said, as his poem was indeed ever in the making, and as, when text A was allowed to be copied, the poem was not finished; when B was made public it was not finished either, and when C appeared the work was left definitively incomplete.

I continue firmly convinced that, from the first, the author had in his mind, as the subject of his work, the three episodes that are in it (the last being left unfinished), namely the episodes of Meed, of Piers, and of Dowel-Dobet-Dobest; and that, contrary to what Professor Manly alleges (p. 12), the A text was not, in the poet's thought, a complete whole. Various mentions in A of Dobet and Dobest are quoted by Professor Manly to sustain his theory, but we find nothing there save a preparation for what was to follow at a later period, and it is only of Dowel that we really hear in that version. The rubrics in MSS seem to me to give a correct idea of what was planned by the author as early as version A. At the end of *passus viii*, where we had first become acquainted with Dowel, we read: "*Incipit Vita de Do-wel, Do-bet et Do-best,*" and it cannot be pretended that A gives us thereupon anything more than the "*Vita de Do-wel.*" In other words, three so-called lives were contemplated, but people, when A was copied and made public, got only one. There was, for the author, a continuation to write, and he wrote it later.

7.—I had said that the Visions exist: "That they were written by someone cannot be considered a rash surmise. Of that one we know little, but that little is considerably better than nothing, better than in the case of more than one mediaeval work of value."¹ Mr. Manly asks thereupon: "What of the logical process by which we pass to the assumption that someone is some *one*?" (p. 13). There is in my sentence no such trickery as Mr. Manly thinks he has discovered: the meaning is, I believe, clear and justifiable enough; and that meaning is, as made evident by the text, that those Visions did not write themselves; and that we know something—not much but yet something—of one, and only one, who is one indeed and not five, judging by all the notes, allusions and references that we possess about him, and which I thereupon enumerate—of one who actually did write the Visions.

¹P. 7 of my article.

8.—Continuing, Professor Manly writes:

But, says Mr. Jusserand, for the unity of authorship of these poems and for the name of the author, we have abundant evidence. In the first place, "without exception, all those titles" . . . (etc.). But here, as often, Mr. Jusserand insists upon arguing concerning B and C, when the question at issue concerns the A text. The old habit of regarding A, B, and C as inseparable, even for the purposes of study, is too strong (p. 13).

Rash assertions, lack of method, persistency in following a wrong course: many faults are thus laid at my door. What is there in all these accusations?—Exactly nothing. First, I did not use at all the word "abundant," but I maintain that what we have is much better than nothing, especially as, in my judgment, no evidence of any weight has been, up to now, produced against it. As for the misdeed of arguing about one version when the question at issue concerned another, the inaccuracy of such a statement is easily demonstrable. In that part of my essay, I had been explaining that the complete poem, with the three episodes of Meed, Piers, and Dowel-Dobet-Dobest had been in the author's mind from the first, from the time indeed when he wrote version A, even from the time when he wrote what Professor Manly considers as the first part of A, that is the first eight passus. These three episodes had, from the earliest moment and ever after, formed, I believe, one whole. To show this I *first* examined, quite apart, p. 7 of my essay, what an inspection of the text of version A had to tell us on this side of the problem; *secondly* I passed on, p. 8, to a different consideration, viz., to an examination of what bearing the titles, colophons, and marginal notes in whatsoever MSS of the poem, might have on this question and on the question of authorship. The two examinations, the two demonstrations, are quite apart. Professor Manly ignores the first, and coming to the second (about which he says, "In the first place"), declares that I "insist" upon mixing irrelevant questions, "as often," led astray by "the old habit," etc. This way of reasoning is not, I consider, to be commended.

9.—Professor Manly contests (p. 15) that the line:

I have lyved in londe, quod I· my name is longe Wille,
—B, XV, 148.

gives us, as a note in MS Laud 581 asserts, "the name of thauctour" (if there was any note of this sort alluding to several authors,

it would not perhaps be treated so lightly, but there is none). He alleges that it might be analogous to the American saying: "I'm from Missouri, you'll have to show me." It is troublesome for him that the same author, as I persist in considering him, who says here, "My name is longe Wille," says elsewhere that he was really and actually "long" of stature: "to long . . . lowe for to stoupe" (C, VI, 24), which connects him again with the words "longe Wille," used as a surname or nickname to designate him. Mr. Manly has, in any case, to confess that he knows of no "other" example where the words Long Will are taken with the ironical sense he suggests: it is a great pity, because just a second example would have helped us so much to believe in the first.

10.—The value of John Bale's notice concerning Langland is, of course, reduced to a minimum by Professor Manly (p. 16). I know very well that Bale is not infallible; he brings, however, in favour of the system I adhere to, the weight, such as it is, of a learning and love of English letters which were not of the lowest order; and I suppose again, as in the case of the notes in MSS, that if he had made even a vague allusion to the possibility of a multiple authorship, Professor Manly would not have disdained making good use of his statement.

11.—Coming to John But, Professor Manly writes: "John But's continuation, slight as it is, is of importance, because it shows that men did not hesitate to continue or modify a text that came into their hands" (p. 17). One might write just as well: John But's continuation, slight as it is, is of importance because it shows that "men" who wrote a continuation did not hesitate to give their name. Mr. Manly says that But signed "out of vanity;" his four other authors had no vanity and did not sign: they were indeed, in this too, the perfect image of one another.

12.—Concerning the Seven Deadly Sins, I consider that what I said in my section III still holds good. In his desire to show in A certain merits not to be found elsewhere, so that he might conclude the authors of the rest must have been different, Professor Manly had written of the description of the Deadly Sins in A: "Each is sketched with inimitable vividness and brevity."¹ Without insisting

¹ *Cambridge History of English Literature*, II, p. 15.

on the question of the brevity of "each" (one of the sins has 76 lines, another 5), I had pointed out that such a statement was quite unfounded, the "inimitably vivid" portrait of Lechery in A being as follows:

Lechour seide 'allas!' and to ur ladi criede
 To maken him han merci' for his misdede,
 Bitwene god almihti' and his pore soule,
 With-that he schulde the Seterday' seven ȝer after
 Drinken bote with the doke' and dynen but ones.

—A, V, 54.

While now gainsaying his first statement and admitting that one "may feel regret that we have no such portraits of [Lechour and Sloth] as we have of Envy, Coveitise and Glotoun" (p. 20), Professor Manly maintains that this passage, in which Lechour contents himself with promising, in fact, not to be Glotoun, is not so unsatisfactory after all: "The only other remedies mentioned in the *Parson's Tale* are continence itself and eschewing the company of the tempter." It cannot but strike Professor Manly himself that, in forgetting this, the author of A, described by him as having such a "capacity for artistic and orderly development" (p. 2) has forgotten the main point, for, if I dare risk an opinion, continence is a better "remedy" for lechery than to drink water on Saturdays. As for the query (p. 20) whether the difference of treatment of the sins, some getting such a masterful portrait as Coveitise or Glotoun, and others receiving such a one as Lechour, is not due to "an artistic purpose" on the part of the author of A, I shall take the liberty of answering nothing.

13.—On the question of the names of the wife and children of Piers, I also adhere to what I formerly said. Mr. Manly objects (p. 22, and cf. p. 10) to my having lightly mentioned those lines in a footnote. I did so because that note was devoted to other examples of the same sort. But I solemnly promise that, if I ever reprint my article, I shall put what I have to say thereon in the text. I shall even show, by at least one more example, how manipulations of an author's manuscript may pass unnoticed by him, without his being two authors. I shall show and confess how this may happen even in our own modern days, even to one who has no less a task

before him than to carry on polemics with Mr. Manly. When the MS of my previous article on the *Piers Plowman* problem was returned to me with proofs, I found that my text had been submitted to a reader or corrector who had taken with it not a few liberties. As his corrections had been made in red ink in my autograph manuscript, it should have been very easy to re-correct what I did not approve of. But what gave me a shudder and made me think of old Langland, who did not have the same reasons as I to be attentive, is that in one place, the reader had, for reasons known only to himself, carried part of a sentence of mine into a quotation from *Piers Plowman*. That bit of plain prose had accordingly been printed as verse: it did not alliterate; the red mark of the corrector was very visible in the MS; yet I read my set of proofs twice without noticing the absurdity. On a last reading, I perceived and corrected it. I have preserved the MS, and the sheet is an interesting proof of what not only a "careless scribe" of the middle ages, but an attentive reader of modern times may do, and the interested author twice overlook.

14.—In the discussion concerning the misplaced Robert the Robber passage, I had mentioned that, in order to make it fit somehow the (wrong) place where he put it, the early copyist of A, to whom we owe the mistake, changed the words, "He highte ȝyuan," which were apparently in the original, into, "And ȝit I-chulle." Professor Manly does not think the scribe can have done any such thing: "Was Adam [Scrivener] then," he asks, "so sleepy that he could not see that lines 236-41 could not possibly be attached to Sloth, and yet so wide awake that he rewrote the first line?" My answer is that, for changing those three words (not the whole line), the scribe needed not be so very wide awake; while he would have been prodigiously so if he had noticed a misplacing of the whole passage, which escaped the notice of critics for centuries. It may also be recalled that, as Middleton observed, "Fools are not at all hours foolish—no more than wise men wise."

If to move the Robert the Robber passage to its proper place would have been a wonder in a scribe, it would have been, of course, more than natural in the author, when he had once noticed the mistake. Langland noticed it when he wrote his version C and corrected it. Professor Manly does not want him to have done so, and

he alleges (p. 22) that it is, in any case, very extraordinary that he did not do it before, as he had "five" occasions to correct the error—"five I say, and I emphasize it."—Mr. Manly pictures to himself a Langland who must have been (an idea all his own) full of care for the copies of his text; he believes apparently that each time the poet allowed one to be made, he must have carefully re-read his original, and doubtless compared the copy with it, in order to correct any mistake that might have crept into either. In this way would he have lost those five occasions emphasized as before said. But this is, on the part of Mr. Manly, a mere supposition, and the probabilities are quite the other way. The writer who left, in *each* of his three versions, at least one incorrect list of the Seven Deadly Sins, was not likely to take so much trouble. That he was not the man to read and revise the copies made of his text, is shown besides, not only by the state of the B version, with Robert the Robber left at the wrong place, but by that of the A version too. Mr. Manly recognizes in the author of that version (and he wants to differentiate him thereby from his supposed two or three successors, more addicted to vagaries), a man of "unerring hand," who "never himself forgets for a moment the relations of any incident to his whole plan," etc.¹ This should be the man, if any, to read and revise the copies made of his work. Yet he did not, as in each and all of the numerous MSS we have of A, the Robert the Robber passage is uniformly where it should not be.

If, on the other hand, as noted before, the author had remodeled the Robert the Robber passage when writing version B, as he remodeled innumerable others, and yet, in spite of his having worked at it, had left it at the wrong place, this would have been a strong presumption in favor of the multiple authorship theory. But it so happens that he did nothing of the sort, and the few verbal differences pointed out by Mr. Manly, these "*minutiae*" as he calls them himself (p. 23), are of the insignificant kind which can be safely referred to the scribe.

15.—I had quoted some examples to show that what had happened to Langland had also happened to others who were unquestionably one man each and not five, and who, besides, were no dreamers and

¹*Cambridge History*, II, p. 5.

writers of allegories. Professor Manly makes light of the Roosevelt example. The former President, owing to his use of slips and to his having had two on the same subject, printed twice the same thing on the same page, read several proofs and gave several editions of his work before noticing at last the mistake, unobserved till then by all critics. Professor Manly finds this sort of thing quite intelligible on Mr. Roosevelt's part (p. 23) and quite unbelievable on the part of Langland; a judgment, the reverse of what one would have expected. He points out that, in the case of the *American Hunter*, there was nothing but a repetition of the same statement—on the same page it may be recalled, so that it should have caught the eye—but yet only a repetition. If Mr. Roosevelt or his printer had allowed, in the second of his parallel statements, "a rhinoceros to stroll into the village of the prairie dogs," he would have noticed the error. According to Mr. Manly, the mistake, uncorrected by Langland in version B of his text (but noticed and corrected in C), is of the rhinoceros kind.

But most obviously it is not, since it remained, as we know, unobserved by printers, critics, and historians for 500 years. If it had been of the rhinoceros type, somebody or other would have noticed it. This increases Mr. Manly's merit in having discovered the mistake, but does not diminish, far from it, the force, value, and appropriateness of the example I quoted.

16.—Another was mentioned by me, Cervantes being the subject thereof. Professor Manly does not accept the interpretation I had given (not on my own authority, but on that of many) of Cervantes' afterthought concerning the theft of Sancho's ass, of how a leaf or slip of his text apparently went astray, and how he failed, though he also had many "occasions" to do so, to set matters straight, and give a plausible text. Mr. Manly prefers the interpretation of the problem given by Mr. Fitzmaurice-Kelly. He is most welcome; I have myself no reason not to prefer it too.

This high authority's account of Cervantes' temper and peculiarities as an author, peculiarities bringing about consequences strangely similar to what we notice in Langland's case, shows that I ought to have insisted rather more than less on this example—

The construction is, of necessity, loose, the proportions unsymmetrical, the incident a farrago of hazard and whim. Written by fits and

starts, in snatches stolen from less congenial work, it has too often an effect of patchiness; over-elaboration and insufficiency of outline are flaunted side by side. The supplementary stories, not all triumphs in themselves, are worked in at random, with no special relevancy. . . . Chronology, method, accuracy were no hobgoblins of

—thus does Mr. Fitzmaurice-Kelly write, not of Langland, but of Cervantes.¹ Of the latter he says also, with respect to certain inconsistencies in his text, that, “no doubt, his memory was sometimes at fault,” which may well have been the case with Langland, too. Cervantes’ intention had first been “to write a short comic story, but the subject mastered him and forced him to enlarge the scope of his original design”—a not unfrequent happening, as shown by Lamartine and his *Jocelyn* and, as we think, Langland and his *Piers Plowman*. “It is curious to reflect,” Mr. Fitzmaurice-Kelly continues, “that Sancho Panza is himself an afterthought. . . . So late as the ninth chapter we read of a Sancho with ‘long shanks’—a squire inconceivable!” If Sancho was an afterthought, and one imperfectly worked into the text, well may the case have been the same with Robert the Robber too. Though one author and not several, Cervantes offers, here and there, remarkable differences in merit and style: “At his best . . . he is a perfect, unsurpassable master. . . . When his attention flags, he sinks at moments into an almost slovenly obscurity.”²

Dealing with the incident of the stealing by Gines de Pasamonte of the ass which Sancho is nevertheless found riding immediately after,³ Mr. Fitzmaurice-Kelly’s interpretation is as follows:

It is plain that Cervantes’ MS must have contained an account of Gines de Pasamonte’s rascality. How this account came to be omitted from the first edition can only be conjectured. . . . The conception was an afterthought and may well have been written down on a loose sheet of paper which was accidentally lost.⁴

For such things will happen.

¹*The Historie of Don Quixote* . . . translated by T. Shelton, with Introduction by Fitzmaurice-Kelly, London, 1896, Vol. I, p. xxviii.

²*Complete Works of Cervantes—Don Quixote*—ed. by Fitzmaurice-Kelly, translated by J. Ormsby, Glasgow, 1901, Vol. I, pp. xvi, xxxiii.

³In the first edition there is no account of the stealing of the ass, but we suddenly find Sancho making mournful allusions to his loss of it, as if we knew how it had happened. In the second and following editions figures the passage under discussion, telling of the theft

⁴*Ibid.*, p. xv.

Mr. Fitzmaurice-Kelly thinks that, owing to some mishap of this sort, the first edition appeared, as it did, with two unintelligible allusions to the theft as having taken place, whereas no account of the actual deed had been given. This discrepancy being noticed by the publisher, he caused the gap to be filled by someone who was not Cervantes, and the filling was inserted by mistake at the wrong place, so that Sancho still rides, for some time, the stolen ass (other commentators are of a different opinion and even consider that the addition, which they attribute to the author himself, is of "extraordinary value").

Contemporary critics made fun of the mistake and derided the author. Cervantes was aware of it; he was also proud of his work and of its success (five editions in less than seven months); he had circulated in it MS before it was printed, and we know that he keenly resented the intrusion of a continuator. Yet he let things go, and he cared no more for the copies of his work than Langland did for those of his own; he never gave the right text, he never asked his printer to put at least the interpolation (supposing it to be one) at the right place; and the curious discrepancies in his text were allowed to stay.

Stranger still, when, nine years after the first, he gave his second part, he showed in chapters 3, 4, and 27, that he was aware something was wrong in the first part, and that it had been made fun of by certain people. He offered, by the mouth of Sancho in chapter 4, a half serious, half jocular answer—a very curious answer which shows that, even then, well aware he had been criticised, proud as he was of his work and of its success, ready, as he proved further on, to resent an intruder's tamperings, he had not taken the trouble to ascertain how the passage of his own text which he had to discuss, really stood. His apologetic remarks do not exactly fit any of the versions of the same. The objection he gives himself to answer is that he had forgotten "to say who the thief was who stole Sancho's Dapple, for it is not stated there, but only to be inferred from what is set down, that he was stolen; and a little farther we see Sancho mounted on the same ass without its having turned up."¹

This cannot apply to the second edition nor to the following ones,

¹ Part ii, chap. 3.

since the passage, said to be interpolated, had been added into them with full explanations as to the stealing of the ass by Gines de Pasamonte mentioned by name. It does not apply any better to the first edition where we gather only, by two passing allusions of Sancho's, that his ass must have been stolen; where there is no account, either of the stealing or the recovery of the animal; and where it is not "a little farther," but much later in the story, that Sancho is actually seen with his ass again. The words "a little farther" fit, on the contrary, very well all the other editions where, ten lines after the account of the theft, we find Sancho "seated sideways, woman fashion, on his ass."¹

Carelessness, inattention, forgetfulness when his great work was in question; over-elaboration and insufficiency of outline appearing side by side; afterthoughts insufficiently worked into the text; parts that are masterful and others of "an almost slovenly obscurity;" indifference as to the copies or editions of his own text, a misplaced leaf remaining definitively misplaced in spite of all the occasions to correct the error (a publisher who took the trouble of having the gap filled by a third party would have welcomed, at any time, the author's own rectification)—all this and more we find in the case of Cervantes who, in spite of it all, was one single author and not several.

17.—Professor Manly objects (p. 24) to my suggestion that the lines C, IX, 84–91 are one more example of a misplaced passage. I expressed the opinion that this added speech of Piers must have, in reality, made part of his address to the Knight. Professor Manly thinks that it should stay where it is, and must be directed to Piers's own son. But Piers's son is not supposed to be present at all, only his name being given in the sort of parenthesis inserted into the Plowman's speech. As for the "unlikelihood that," as Mr. Manly says, "the peasant Piers would assume this tone with the Knight and call him 'dere sone'" (p. 25), it is scarcely necessary to recall that Piers, far from appearing there as a "peasant" pure and simple, had been given by the poet the part of leader, and had undertaken to show to all classes of society the way to truth, the Knight having personally acknowledged the old man's leadership.

¹Part I, chap. 23.

18.—“Furthermore,” Professor Manly continues, “if Mr. Jusserand accepts Professor Skeat’s view that MS Laud 581 was corrected by the author himself, or perhaps indeed his own autograph, it is worth observing” (p. 26). No conclusion whatever should be drawn from such a surmise, restated more than once; I certainly never said a word in my article implying that I adhered to a hypothesis which, I believe, Professor Skeat does not himself adhere to any more.

19.—What I said on the Robert the Robber passage,¹ on its being rightly put, in C, at the place where it belonged from the first, on the “much lauded Welshman” (why “much lauded,” and what does that mean?), I strictly maintain; let the reader weigh the evidence. I certainly fail to see that C, as Professor Manly contends, far from improving the text, changed, at the beginning of the passage, a simple and grammatical sentence into a monster “neither the flesh of a name nor the fish of a promise, a ghastly amphibian,” etc., (p. 27). C, we are asked to believe, removed the Robber passage from a place where it made nonsense, only to put it at another where it does not fit, just what could be expected from one who was not the original author and knew no better. C, moreover, introduced in the first description of the sins (B, V; C, vii) a number of passages borrowed from other parts of text B, “And it seems clear that C had no better reason for his transfer of the Robber passage than for his transfer of the others” (p. 28). In other words, he had no good reason for either, he acted arbitrarily (not to say nonsensically): what else could be expected, since he was not the original author?—But he *was*, and acted quite sensibly, having excellent reasons in both cases for doing what he did, namely, putting the Robber passage at a place which is, I maintain, the only one for which it can have been written, and for suppressing, by the other changes, one of the descriptions of the Deadly Sins (the one in B, XIII, spots on the coat of Haukyn), two of them being fused into one. Langland felt, when writing C, and this is a not unique proof of good taste given by him when making this revision, that those descriptions were too numerous and that one could disappear with advantage.

20.—Speaking of the “much lauded Welshman,” *žyvan želd-ažeyn*,

¹Section III of my previous article, pp. 14 ff.

otherwise Reddite, Professor Manly contests the identification which I proposed of the two, though the text itself makes it plain. I had pointed out that this peculiar device (an abstract Latin word figuring also in the poem as a live being) was not used by Langland in this place only, and that what we find here in C, we had found before in A, even in what Professor Manly considers as the first part of A, the work of the earliest of his four authors.¹ On this he offers no remark.

21.—Professor Manly having, like many before him, noticed the absence of Wrath in the description of the Seven Deadly Sins in A, V, drew from this conclusions of considerable magnitude. It seemed to him that to forget one of the sins was an impossibility; the author of the first part of A especially, that precise mind who has, he thinks, “definiteness” for his characteristic and is described as so different from B, who is incapable of “consecutive thinking,” cannot possibly have made such an omission. He must have written a description of Wrath, but it must have been lost, and the lost half-leaf must have been the counterpart of another half-leaf where the poet must have written a long passage (long indeed it must have been) to properly connect the confession of Sloth with that of a thief.

Langland himself supplies the answer, for he did not omit Wrath in one list of the Seven Sins in A, but in two; so that, whatever may be the case with others, such omissions were certainly possible to him, and this is enough to seriously shake our belief in the lost half-leaf; for the poet really *could* forget a sin.

More than that, as I pointed out, what took place in the B and C revisions is, so far as it goes, evidence of a single and not a multiple authorship. This omission of one of the sins, by an author giving a description of them, “incredible” says Professor Manly (p. 31), nearly impossible as it is, is yet made in his turn by the author of B just as by the author of A, and by that of C just as by that of B; which reveals a strange similarity in the foibles of Professor Manly’s “several men of notable intellectual power.” This neither he, nor anyone, I believe, had ever observed. Yet it is a fact that B, while he notices the absence of Wrath and adds him in the two places where he was missing in A, when he has to draw up one more list himself, draws

¹P. 23 of my article.

it wrong, forgetting Envy. C leaves this same list incomplete, with Envy still lacking. The more "incredible" such doings, the more symptomatic of a unique authorship.

Let the reader value as he may think fit the explanation now offered by Professor Manly. His explanation is that such omissions, so extraordinary in A as to justify, he considers, the belief in a hypothetical lost leaf, are very natural when B is in question. Better still, they were purposely made, they were made for "some particular reason," for a reason "not hard to discover" (p. 30), and that reason is one of art and logic: an unexpected reason, to say the least, when we remember Mr. Manly's denunciation of B's "incapacity for organized and consecutive thinking," and his "tendency to rambling and vagueness," especially "in the third vision,"¹ the one presently under consideration. Anyhow, Professor Manly's reason "not hard to discover" is to the effect that the author there enumerates the Deadly Sins, just to show that Poverty is not liable to them, and that Envy is appropriately omitted because Poverty cannot be considered as immune from it. But, if the reason imagined by Professor Manly were accepted (to the great credit of B's capacity for "organized and consecutive thinking"), Wrath should have been omitted as well as Envy, for Poverty is as liable to the one as to the other. For what cause, besides, just before they draw up their incomplete list, B as well as C is careful to point out that they are presently dealing with the 'sevene synnes that there ben" (B, XIV, 201), and to repeat once more that the "sevene synnes" are their theme (B, XIV, 218), Mr. Manly no less carefully abstains from explaining.

My own explanation, if I may venture one, is that Langland *could* omit sins in his lists, and that the three versions are by him.

22.—On the respective merits of the portrait of Wrath added by B (so unsatisfactory, according to Professor Manly, as to denote a different author) and of the portraits of the sins in A, I cannot but repeat what I said, and what I said was to the effect that, when Professor Manly stated that, in A, each sin was sketched "with inimitable vividness," he misstated the case. Let anyone who doubts read again, for example, the sketch of Lechour quoted above (remark 12). Wrath is certainly not more unsatisfactory in B than some

¹ *Cambridge History*, pp. 23, 24.

others in A, and it is difficult to understand how Professor Manly can allege that, in A, "Lechour is the lecherous man," while, in B, Wrath (represented "with two whyte eyen, and nyvelyng with the nose, and his nekke hangyng") is "in no sense the wrathful man" (p. 33). Both descriptions should be read together, without forgetting that I have shown that those attributes of Wrath in B, which Professor Manly had chosen to consider so very irrelevant, are, on the contrary, the usual, commonplace, classical ones, given to that sin by the mediaeval manuals of greatest authority. Professor Manly pretends that I "tried to answer his charge" by saying "that Envy and Wrath are so much alike that B cannot justly be criticized for giving us a portrait of Envy and labeling it Wrath" (p. 32). Yet, in spite of what Mr. Manly writes there, and repeats, p. 33, I never committed myself in such grave matters; I never presumed to say that Envy and Wrath are either alike or different; I only did what I supposed was right: I quoted contemporary texts giving what was then the accepted opinion, of more importance on those questions than mine or that of Professor Manly. I quoted some lines from the *Parson's Tale*, and might have quoted many more to the same effect, those, for example, where the Parson declares that there are three sources for "Ira," namely Pride, Envy, "and thanne stant the sinne of contumelie or stryf and cheeste," on which precisely B insists. Chaucer's Ira "stryveth eek alday agayn trouthe"—"lesynges I ymped," says Langland's Wrath in B (V, 138).

23.—Professor Manly's remark that, if there is a great difference of style between the Parson's tale and the Miller's (the author being nevertheless only one man), the cause must be that Chaucer was influenced by his original (p. 34), does not destroy my argument. It shows that, under certain influences, an author may use very different styles, and yet continue to be one and not several; those influences may come, not only from a difference of original, but a difference of time, disposition, and subject.

24.—The question of the supposed mistakes or failures to understand their supposed predecessors, attributed by Professor Manly to his several authors, is by him studied again. I persevere in my views, and referring the reader to the article in which I have developed them, I shall only offer the following observations:

In B, Professor Manly had said, "Lewte is introduced as the leman of the Lady Holy Church and spoken of as feminine." My answer, I deem, holds good: Lemman meaning a "tenderly loved being of either sex," I do not see why Mrs. Lewte would not be for Lady Holy Church, just as well as Mr. Lewte would have been, a leman, or tenderly loved being. I maintain also that the only proof of B having made of Lewte a feminine personage is that, at one place, we read "hire" instead of "him," and that this is in truth no proof at all. Professor Manly cannot reconcile himself to the thought that a scribe may have been guilty of such a blunder—consisting in the change of one letter (and corrected in C). Since the change creates, according to him, nonsense, he considers that it must necessarily come from the author! To "relieve" the author of the responsibility arbitrarily laid thus on his shoulders, Mr. Manly wants "something in the text to indicate that 'hire' is a scribe's error" (p. 35). I make bold to say that this is asking too much.

25.—Professor Manly had said also, in order so show that we had to do with several authors, that in B, "Fals instead of Wrong is father of Meed, but is made to marry [*i. e.* to prepare to marry] her later." I continue to think that, here too, B is not guilty, and that the passage was improved, not spoiled, by him. If Wrong was to be at all the father, he should have been made to play a more important part than he does in A, where, so long as the marriage is in question, he does nothing, but awakens from his torpor later in a completely different episode (IV, 47 ff.) in which he entirely ceases to be alluded to as the father of Meed, though Meed is present and plays also a part in the incident: all this, in that A text, the work, we are told, of a man of "unerring hand," who "never himself forgets for an instant the relation of any incident to his whole plan."¹ No less than B and C, A was fallible.

It may be observed, on the other hand, that, according to Professor Manly, Meed was such "a desirable bride" that her father did not need to do anything in order to secure a husband for her: hence, we are told, his inactivity; the same authority finds, however, quite natural that a portion be nevertheless provided for her, not by her father, but by a friend. It seems to me that B followed the

¹ *Cambridge History*, p. 5.

dictates of common sense in suppressing useless Wrong in this episode and in giving Favel for both a father and portion-provider to Meed.

As for Fals having been written at one place for Favel in B, I pointed out that similar slips of the pen occur at different places in the *three* texts. Mr. Manly ironically insists, as usual, on that "most troublesome person" the scribe, on that "careless or meddling scribe," so as to give the impression that I attribute too much to copyists. But such is not the case, and besides I do not do it to the extent he is pleased to say. In this case, in particular, I did not attribute the blunders in question specifically and exclusively to the scribe, and Mr. Manly might have remembered that what I wrote was: "Such slips of the pen would have been difficult for any copyist *and even for any author* to avoid, in such a passage as this, with so many lines alliterating in *f*, and Favel fair speech, and Fals fickle tongue constantly succeeding one another" (p. 34 of my article). The same might very well happen also to more than one of us, and I could quote as many examples as might be deemed necessary.

26.—I shall not continue further the discussion of the supposed misdeeds of B, but shall only state that I persist in pleading not guilty for him all along the line, being unable to understand how, for example, Professor Manly can seriously ask "whether any student of *Piers Plowman* ever clearly recognized that [the] feoffment (in B, II, 74 ff) is intended to cover 'precisely the provinces of the Seven Deadly Sins,' before acquaintance with the simpler form of the A text enabled him to perceive the plan overlaid by the elaborations of B and C" (p. 39). The so-called "elaborations" which "overlay" the original plan, fill, all told, *ten* lines more in B than in A; and B can even claim that he has a right to more room than was used before, as the "simpler form of the A text" was really too simple, one of the sins having been forgotten in that version.

27.—On questions of dialect and versification, Professor Manly asks us to wait; let us. It cannot be unfair, however to note, in the meanwhile, that Miss Mary Deakin's study of the *Alliteration in Piers Plowman* has led her to the conclusion that, to all appearances, "the alliteration gives no support to Professor Manly's theory."¹

¹ *Modern Language Review*, July, 1909, p. 483.

28.—On the difference in merit between A, B, and C, denoting four different authorships, Professor Manly protests (p. 44) that he never said that the "first part of A was the best in the whole work." If I mistook his meaning, I am sorry. I may, however, recall that, after having written the words just mentioned, I quoted the very expressions used by him, at different places, in praise of the first part of A, and which had given me, and may have given others, the impression he objects to.¹ The fact has, however, no importance, as the discussion bore only on those specific qualities recognized by Professor Manly in A and which he fails to find in the supposed authors of B and C, concluding that they must be different people. I think I have shown that those differences were not at all what Professor Manly wanted us to believe, and, in particular, that what he told us of A's "unity of structure and art of composition," of the author never forgetting "for a moment the relation of any incident to his whole plan," of his superiority in this respect to B, who is incapable of "consecutive thinking" and with whom "topics alien to the main theme intrude because of the use of a suggestive word," is entirely unacceptable. I have given, I consider, glaring examples of A's aptitude for vagaries; my judgment on this propensity of his being, if anything, too indulgent. Let anyone read the original passage which I summed up in my first example, and say whether the explanation, by Lady Holy Church, of the field full of folk is at all satisfactory and answers, in any way, our ideas of sound texture. I showed, I believe, that what the lady had to explain was not hard to make clear, and would have been made so but for A's disposition to wander. Professor Manly takes exception to my having quoted the MS of the Valenciennes Passion (p. 45). I quoted it because it is the best known and oftenest reproduced. I shall not go into a discussion of the similar arrangement of the mansions of a mediaeval stage in England and in France, and shall simply recall that the scene to be described was plain and familiar enough: if we have no English MS showing such a mystery-play in action, pictures of the same scenes, with God's tower and the devil's "dungun," were to be seen in a number of churches (Shakespeare could see one in his youth at Stratford, a certainly English town) and were familiar to the many.

¹P. 39 of my article.

Professor Manly asserts, it is true, that my account of the passage is inadequate and unsatisfactory. I do not think that his is perfect, either. But take the original, and you cannot fail to find that A does exactly what B is accused by Professor Manly of doing—and accused in view of proving that the author must have been a different man: a “suggestive word” makes him treat of a “topic alien to the main theme.” The main theme was the two castles and the field full of folk, and the topic on which A insists most is drunkenness.

I had quoted, pp. 41 and 42, n. 1, several other examples of incoherence, instead of “structural excellence”, in A; Professor Manly mentions only this one and says nothing of the others, so it is perhaps needless to add that I might have quoted, and that anyone may find, as many more as may be wanted. We had been told of differences between A and B, and we find similitudes.

29.—Wanting to show, from another point of view, more differences between A, B, and C, Professor Manly had said, after he had discussed the first vision: “Only once or twice does the author interrupt his narrative to express his own views and feelings.” I had thought, wrongly as it turns out, that the first part of A was meant, and I had pointed out five examples of such interruptions instead of “one or two.” But Professor Manly’s remark, of very moderate scope indeed, applied, I see (p. 46), only to the first half of the first half of A. It remains, however, that this device was resorted to in very appreciable fashion by the author of A—of the first part of A—and that the increase in the number of such cases in B and C is more apparent than real, since the bulk of the poem was considerably increased, too, in these versions: 7241 lines in B, against 2579 in A.

30.—Professor Manly cannot conceive that an author having written a fine line, or a fine passage, or a fine poem in his youth, may spoil it or leave it out in his later years. If such spoilings or discardings are discovered, then, he thinks, two different men must have been at work. He quotes two such examples from version C: one is the fine line in A and B, “Perceñ with a *pater noster*” (which he deems to be only a translation of *Brevis oratio penetrat caelum*: it is luckily much more); the line is certainly spoilt in C, and spoilt to such an extent as to be meaningless, so that we may well doubt we have the real text, whether it be by Langland or by somebody else. The

other is the splendid appeal to God: "Ac pore peple thi prisoneres," which C omits altogether; Mr. Manly exclaims thereupon: "Would you not expect the man who had written those lines to preserve them? . . . Would you not really?" (p. 48).

The fact is that men are not the simple, logical and *once-for-all* individuals Mr. Manly fancies them to be, and the expectation he so fervidly expresses is doomed to be defeated, not by Langland alone, but by a number of poets and prosators of all times and countries, one man each of them, not four. Would you not expect the poet who had written the beautiful sonnet:

Je veux lire en trois jours l'Iliade d'Homère,

to preserve it? Yet Ronsard left it out of his works and never reproduced it in any edition of his writings, after 1560.

Would you not expect the man who had become famous by his *strambotti*, and had rendered poems of that kind fashionable, to preserve his? Yet Chariteo, whose reputation rested on such writings, having printed them in 1506, suppressed them in his works after 1509.

Would you not expect the man who had written the splendid sentences on music, on the stairway of the Vatican, on the Tiber and the Roman campagna, just published by the *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, to preserve them? Shakespeare did not, every day, write better. Yet Châteaubriand left them among discarded fragments of the *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*, and they remained unprinted till now.¹

Mr. Christian Maréchal has pointed out, in his before-quoted work, a number of passages in which Lamartine replaced admirable lines to be found in the early versions of his *Jocelyn* by more commonplace ones, or discarded them altogether.² Yet again all those men were

¹ *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, two articles by A. Feugère, April and September, 1909, pp. 584, 585, 589. Here are two of those sentences: "Je vais saluer Léon XII après avoir traversé la magnifique place de Saint-Pierre; je monte avec une émotion toujours nouvelle le grand escalier désert du Vatican, foulé par tant de pas effacés et d'où descendirent tant de fois les destinées du monde."—"Je me perdais dans ces sentiments indécis que fait naître la musique, art qui tient le milieu entre la nature matérielle et la nature intellectuelle, qui peut dépouiller l'amour de son enveloppe terrestre ou donner un corps à l'ange du ciel. Selon les dispositions de celui qui les écoute, ces mélodies sont des pensées ou des caresses."

² *Jocelyn inédit*, 1909, pp. lvii, lxiii, xcvi, xcvi, xcvi, xcvi ff. Some of those fine lines, Mr. Maréchal writes, "Lamartine les a sacrifiées sans regret, mais nous ne saurions accepter d'un cœur aussi léger un pareil sacrifice," p. xcvi.

essentially artists (while Langland was not), that is, men who, if any, would have preserved the artistic products of their pen. Time and again they did not: much more could Langland act likewise, without Professor Manly being justified in cutting him into pieces.

Add thereto, that when we come to think of the hypothesis Professor Manly wants us to accept, of a new author freely remodeling another's work, of a new author who is a "sincere man," who is a man of "notable intellectual power" (and no less can be said of the poet who wrote the touching melancholy addition at the beginning of *passus vi* in C, the picturesque and realistic portraits of the lollers and sham hermits, etc.), we are free to think that those spoilings or discardings are scarcely less surprising on the part of such a supposed reviser than on the part of the author, and we might say, in our turn: Would you not expect such a reviser, finding those lines, to preserve them? . . . Would you not really?

31.—I continue unable to agree with Professor Manly on the question of the pardon granted to Piers, the only sort of pardon to fit such a being, one with the grandest and noblest import, not one certainly to be torn to pieces by that high-souled leader. The tearing to pieces is suppressed in C, to the immense advantage of the scene and dismay of Professor Manly, whose system does not apparently allow him to permit the author of C to act so well. He considers, therefore (p. 48), that it is quite natural for Piers, in B, and also in A, to destroy, out of spite, or, as Mr. Manly prefers to say, "out of grief and disappointment," the scroll giving him and his followers their rule of life—out of grief and disappointment, because he is shown by a priest of the vulgar-minded sort, by a "lewede lorel,"¹ that his bill contains the noblest precept, and is not one of those pardons which despicable pardoners "gaf for pans." Piers to be "disappointed" at that!

In A and B the passage is absolutely unintelligible and inconsistent, to the point of being a serious blemish in those versions. C immensely improved it, and in more ways than one: in the A version the pardon was twice said to have been procured from the pope, which did not fit with what followed; B suppressed one of the irrelevant allusions to the pope, and C suppressed both.²

¹ A, VIII, 123.

² A, VIII, 8, 21; B, VII, 8, 19; C, X, 8, 23.

To further diminish C's merit, Professor Manly accuses the poet of having badly joined together what he left after he had suppressed the unacceptable tearing of the scroll and suppressed also the rambling speech delivered thereupon by Piers in A (for rambling speeches, sad to say, are to be found in A, too). Well may the fault be contested,¹ but it is of small consequence. Supposing the case to be as we are told, Langland's more or less clever joining together of the two rims of the gap left by his removal of the obnoxious passage is of very little import: of such sins he was certainly capable. The removal of the lines is, on the contrary, of great import, as it leaves to Piers his true character, and makes of the whole scene one of the grandest in the poem.

32.—Professor Manly would "also like to know the meaning of B, VII, 168 (C, X, 318) B and C apparently thought 'preost' was the subject of 'divinede,' whereas the subject is, of course, 'I,' implied in 'me' of l. 152" (p. 49).

The truth is that the passage is not clear, logical or grammatical in either of the three texts, and we all wish it were the only one of that sort in Langland. The author of C, whether Langland, as I believe, or a reviser, as Mr. Manly thinks, cannot certainly have meant that, according to the priest, "Dowel indulgences passedede," since this was bound to be Piers's and not the priest's opinion; and the poet was as fully aware of it when writing C as when composing A and B, since, a few lines before, he had recalled, in this last version, the opposition of views between the two men, and how "the preest inpuigned" the "pardon Peers hadde" (C, X, 300), and since, moreover, C is the only text where the episode is given its full value.

Though I know how unwilling Professor Manly is to admit that the original copyist may have been so inordinately clumsy as to mistake two or three letters, I am tempted to suggest that very possibly, while the copies we have of C read: "And how the preest prevede," the

¹ All the reasoning is founded on the line,

The preest thus and Perkyn of the pardon jangled (C, X, 292),

"which is nonsense," says Mr. Manly, "after the suppression of the jangling" (p. 48). But the opposition between the views of the priest and those Piers must have entertained, may have been thought by the author to be sufficiently indicated by the priest's remark "Ich can no pardon fynde," and to justify the allusion to the jangling. Very possibly, however, the original text did not read *thus*, but *tho* (then), which gave the line a clear and unimpeachable meaning.

original read: "And how that peers prevede" (C, X, 318). If this is considered too bold, I would answer that it is not more so than to suppose, as Professor Manly does, that in A (whose logic must be saved at all costs, though it cannot be saved after the tearing of the "pardon" by Piers), "I" is "of course" implied by "me" of l. 152. The whole passage in A is as follows—and, as Langland would have said, let anyone who can "construe this on Englisch":

Al this maketh me· on metels to thenken
 Mony tyme at midniht· whon men schulde slepe,
 On Pers the plouh-mon· and whuch a pardoun he hedde,
 And hou the preost inpu gnede hit· al bi pure resoun,
 And divinede that Dowel· indulgence passede.

—A, VIII, 152.

33.—To Professor Manly's "great surprise" (p. 49), I refused to find any failure of C to understand B, when the former modified the passage about the belling of the cat.

At the risk of still increasing Professor Manly's surprise, I emphatically persist in my way of thinking, and deem that C deserves praise, not blame. I persist in considering that in B, the passage was unsatisfactory: in which passage the well-spoken rat describes certain "segges" or beings—by which he means dogs, I fully agree in this with Mr. Manly, everybody does, and the point is not under discussion—who are to be seen in "the cite of London," who bear about their necks bright collars of crafty work, and who go "uncoupled" in "wareine and in waste." If they bore a bell on their collars,

Men myȝte wite where thei went· and awei renne.

—B, Prol., 166.

This is certainly a clumsy speech. The "segges" being dogs in B, and obviously sporting dogs, whom their masters uncouple to use them in warrens, how can we imagine that, if they had a bell on their necks, men would know where they go, and "away run!" In this part of his speech, B's rat seems to me, I confess, a very silly rat.

C's changes are quite sensible and to his credit. Far from showing a "failure to understand" the earlier version and helping us to believe in a quadruple authorship, they lead the other way. The author deliberately drops all the allusions to dogs, as they fitted

imperfectly his purpose; he suppresses the mention of the uncoupling, the warren, etc., and replaces the whole by a very clear and pointed allusion to actual men and to actual customs prevailing then in England. "But this is a beast fable," Professor Manly exclaims; "what have men to do in it, among the rats and mice? . . . And above all, why the warrens and the waste? Do men run uncoupled in rabbit warrens and waste fields?" But C does not say that they do, and is grievously misrepresented here by Professor Manly. As evidenced, on the other hand, by numberless examples, from the days of Æsop to those of Langland, in a "beast fable," men are not necessarily ignored; a rat is not bound to allude only to animals, and may just as well, like the swallow in Æsop's fine fable of the Swallow and Birds, allude to men, especially if the meaning is to be made clearer thereby. And such is the case here, C's rearrangement being as follows:

Ich have yseie grete syres · in citees and in tounes
 Bere byzes of bryȝt gold · al aboute hure neckes,
 And colers of crafty werke · bothe knyȝtes and squiers.
 Were ther a belle on hure byȝe · by Jesus, as me thynketh,
 Men myȝte wite wher thei wenten · and hure way roume.
 Ryȝt so (etc.)

—C, Prol., 177.

34.—Passing to the personal notes to be found in the Visions and which, I consider, point to a unity of authorship, Professor Manly, in order to minimize their importance, declares that they are, "in reality, singularly few" (p. 54). They are, in reality, singularly numerous: we must remember the period when *Piers Plowman* was written, and I should like to know what are the poems in comparison with which the personal notes in the Visions can be described as being, in reality, singularly few.

As to localities, Professor Manly says that "the Malvern hills are no doubt a locality with which A1 had special associations of some sort, but they have apparently no special significance for the other writers" (p. 53). It should be observed, in this respect, that C not only preserved all those allusions supposed to be for him without special significance, but increased their number by one. After the added passage at the beginning of passus vi, where the author considers his past life, thinks of his childhood, of his father, of his friends

of former days, the name of Malvern recurs to his mind and he tells us that he now resumes the dreams he had dreamed on those same hills:

Thenne mette me moche more than ich by-fore tolde
Of the mater that ich mette fyrst on Malverne hulles.

—C, VI, 109.

The counterpart of the first of these lines but not of the second is to be found in versions A and B.

35.—As to the author's sayings about himself, his youth, his disappointments, his way of living, Professor Manly persists in fancying that all this must be fancy: but that is, on his part, mere guessing. I have recalled how certain recent discoveries show that some prudence should be used in forming hypotheses of this sort, and that poets were, in such cases, guided by their memory and not by their imagination oftener than latter-day critics would have us to believe. To the examples I have given, more than one might be added, selected from various times and countries, for men will resemble men, poets will resemble poets.¹

36.—Professor Manly insists that, given their names, Kitte and Kalote must have been dissolute women (p. 55) in spite of my having pointed out that this interpretation of the words would be as untenable in the case of a reviser as in that of the original author, since the passage, very beautiful in itself, would thus become absurd if not repugnant. He answers nothing to what I have said and shown, that before such names become definitively opprobrious, there is a long period when they are used both ways.² Mr. Manly, who comes forth with a theory of his own, rejecting the usual ideas on the subject and replacing them by an interpretation which causes the passage to be, in spite of what he alleges, meaningless, has done nothing to show that, for those names, such a period was past, and that the meaning cannot but have been shameful.

37.—I never desired to hold Professor Manly "responsible for every phrase of Professor Jack's article" (p. 56). I simply quoted Mr. Manly himself, according to whom Mr. Jack had "conclusively proved"

¹ This example, for instance. Studying Lamartine's famous novel of *Raphael*, Mr. Léon Séché writes thus: "Chose remarquable et que les incrédules d'hier sont bien forcés de reconnaître aujourd'hui, Lamartine n'a rien inventé dans ce roman ou pas grand chose. C'est tout au plus si, par endroits, il a interverti l'ordre chronologique des faits et les quelques inexactitudes qu'on y relève sont plutôt attribuables à l'infidélité de sa mémoire."—*Revue Hebdomadaire*, Oct. 3, 1908, p. 31.

² "Péronnelle" is another example of a feminine name remaining, for a long time, an honorable one, and then coming, by degrees, to be used disparagingly.

that the "supposed autobiographical details" in the poem were merely part of the fiction. I showed that the latter had "conclusively proved" nothing of the kind, and given what he had to concede in the end, he could not himself pretend that he had. I continue to believe that, so long as no positive text or fact contradicts the plain statements in the poem (and no such has been adduced), we are entitled to take them for what they are given.

III

At certain places in his article, Professor Manly pays me some compliments which I should be most happy to merit, and some others which, I hope, I do not deserve. He attributes to me an "eloquence" and "dexterity" which, since he, for his part, repudiates all such, I hope I am not afflicted with: the success he looks forward to, he tells us, for his own argumentation is "not a success of dialectical dexterity, but of sound reasoning" (pp. 1, 2).

I hope some sound reasoning may be found in my article, too.

At the end of his reply, Professor Manly begs his reader not to forget that, on my road, "many of the bridges which are fairest in outward seeming are really unsafe structures with a crumbling keystone; that pitfalls lie concealed beneath some of the most attractive stretches . . ." etc., and that, if he allows himself to be carried away by my eloquence, he will have "to turn back and seek painfully the plain highway," regretting to have abandoned it "for the soft but dangerous by-paths" to which I had lured him.

I had no idea that I had thus played the part of a land siren, attracting unwary travelers to dangerous regions. I thought, in fact, that I had done nothing, from the first, but defend old, plain, commonly accepted ideas, and follow the trodden way and most people's road, having chosen the most inglorious and unfashionable task. I did so, not out of abnegation, but simply because those ideas, in my judgment, were the sounder, and had been attacked without just motives. And I beg, in my turn, the reader to be assured that it was not in "soft but dangerous by-paths" that I found cause for the belief in which I persist, that "William Langland made Pers Ploughman."

J. J. JUSSEMAND

SAINT HAON-LE-CHÂTEL
August, 1909